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U.S. MOVES TO DEPORT EX-NICARAGUAN REBEL LEADER
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WASHINGTON

Several House Democrats are accusing the Reagan administration of seeking to "silence debate" on its Central America policy by trying to deport former Nicaraguan rebel leader Edgar Chamorro.

Chamorro, a director of the rebels' Nicaraguan Democratic Force, or FDN, until he was fired last November for criticizing the CIA, said Friday he was told by the Immigration and Naturalization Service he was no longer eligible to remain in the United States.

Chamorro said he plans to contest the INS' deportation action.

"I guess former freedom fighters are not free to stay in our country if they criticize our administration," said Rep. Norman Y. Mineta, D-Calif.

The INS decision came two weeks after Chamorro traveled to Washington to urge Congress not to renew U.S. aid to the rebels who are fighting to overthrow Nicaragua's Sandinista government.

"The INS should read the Constitution. It guarantees equal protection under the law, not selective enforcement," Mineta said.

INS officials confirmed that they had begun deportation proceedings against Chamorro but denied the move was politically motivated.

Perry Rivkin, INS Miami district director, said his office had received no administration pressure to act against Chamorro and termed the timing of the deportation action "just a twist of fate."

Rivkin said he was not aware until this week that deportation proceedings had not been initiated.

"I happened to read stories (Chamorro) wrote in the New York Times and the Miami Herald this week in which he mentioned his asylum denial and revocation of work status, so I asked for the file," Rivkin said.

"No one had sent him a notice (for deportation hearings), so I initiated it. All I did was put in motion what should have been done last December. It was totally routine."

But Chamorro said he considered the action linked to his trip to Washington and opinion articles he wrote, which appeared this past week.

Rep. Bill Alexander, D-Ark., deputy majority whip, said, "I suspect that the deportation proceedings are politically inspired ... by Mr. Chamorro's opposition to Mr. Reagan's war in Central America."

Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., who appeared at a Capitol Hill news conference with Chamorro, called the INS move "an outrage. ... It's a perfect example of the administration using the immigration laws to censor debate."

Rep. Robert W. Kastenmeier, D-Wis., a House Intelligence Committee member, said members of Congress had been "very favorably impressed" with Chamorro and added: "The administration is having difficulty tolerating true Nicaraguan

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